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Medical
[Signature]
30 August 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Personnel

SUBJECT : The Effects of Clandestine Activities on Agency Personnel

1. Since its conception, the Medical Office has been interested in the incidence of stress and the nature of the stress relationships in our people. Originally, this interest was primarily concerned with the physical manifestations and resultants but as further experience was acquired, the emotional bases and counterparts became recognized. In 1952, this interest was given formal recognition through the establishment of a Psychiatric Division within the Medical Office.

2. It is much too early in the history of the Agency and the experience of the Medical Office to draw any final scientific conclusions. However, certain observations are permissible.

a. There have been no cases in which learned aggressive and combative techniques have resulted per se in the development of major emotional illness. It is true, however, that emotional illness appearing in an individual for combined reasons may find expression in such activities.

b. A more potent stress to our employees lies in the indoctrination and re-enforcement of habitual attitudes of suspicion, secretiveness, compartmentation, and manipulation of others. There is no doubt that such continued aura contributes to illness in some and varying degrees of incapacity in others.

c. Subtle stresses are created through the limitations of usual social relationships imposed by clandestine requirements.

The full dimensions of these observations are certainly not as yet realized and these are areas of continuing interest and application within the Medical Office.

3. The Medical Office seeks to meet the problems of stress in several ways; emphasis is placed on psychiatric selection and utilization. The purpose of this is to prevent exposure of individual

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employees to stresses which they cannot tolerate without risk of untoward emotional disturbance. In addition, the selection mechanism inherently provides for the early recognition of emotional illness so that treatment and rehabilitation may be effected.

As the psychiatric program develops in the future and as stresses are better understood, appropriate mental hygiene measures will become established especially in the fields of preventive instruction, group therapy, and re-education.

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MO/JRT:mam

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- 2 -